



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Fourth Judicial District Convenes at Wayzata High School for Students to Observe Court in Action

Minneapolis (Jan. 12, 2007) - Wayzata High School students observed court in session at their school today as a part of a community outreach effort by the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

The state's largest trial court conducted a Rasmussen hearing and considered arguments in the case – *State of Minnesota vs. Dana Marie Daml, defendant (Court File No. 06016273)*. The purpose of the Rasmussen hearing was to determine if evidence obtained from a search and seizure could be suppressed or admitted at trial. In this case, the defendant was charged with felony possession of a controlled substance in the fifth degree, which was alleged to have occurred in Brooklyn Park on March 7, 2006.

The Hennepin County District Court welcomes the opportunity to show the justice system at work. Judge Gary Larson, the presiding judge, believes that "Courts must take an active role in public education, and holding court in a community setting is one way to educate the public about the third (judicial) branch of government."

More than 140 students observed today's hearing in the forum room, and it was also videotaped by students.

One of the judiciary's top strategic priorities is to increase public trust and confidence by strengthening public education regarding the role of the courts. This is the first time the Fourth Judicial District has convened at Wayzata High School.

"We depend on strong courts to uphold the Constitution and to rule on cases fairly and impartially, based on the facts and the law. Strong courts are an essential part of our democracy and provide vital balance in our government," said Fourth Judicial District Chief Judge Lucy Wieland.

About the Fourth Judicial District

The State of Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District serves only Hennepin County and is the state's largest trial court with more than 750,000 cases received annually. The mission of the Fourth Judicial District is to provide a system of justice that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

Sixty-two judges, 15 referees and more than 550 staff serve in these courts: Civil, Criminal/Traffic (including Domestic Violence, Drug, Alcohol and the Community Impact and Property Calendars), Juvenile, Probate/Mental Health, Family, Housing, and Conciliation. Fourth Judicial District judges and staff strive to offer an accessible, fair, courteous, efficient and innovative system of justice for its communities.

Fourth Judicial District facilities in downtown Minneapolis are located at the Hennepin County Government Center, the Public Safety Facility, the Juvenile Justice Center, the Family Justice Center, and City Hall. The suburban court facilities are located in Brooklyn Center (Brookdale/Division II), Minnetonka (Ridgedale/Division III), and Edina (Southdale/Division IV). For more information, visit the website at www.mncourts.gov/district/4/.